# THE VOICE OF ALASKA'S CAPITAL SINCE 1912 SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2017

WEATHER | Partly sunny and cold; High 25, Low 16 | B8

JUNEAU STYLE | A5



### VISITORS ON THE HOME TEAM

Meet Juneau's foreign exchange athletes. B1.

### **WASTE FACILITY BREAK-IN**

Police seeking culprit. A12.

### SHIPWRECKS, PIRACY & WAR FEVER

A strange story from 100 years ago. **Below**.

# Juneau's rape kit backlog: 'one of the worst' in the nation

70 percent of kits from capital city sit in storage, untested

> By JAMES BROOKS JUNEAU EMPIRE

Since April, Vanessa Nason has been trying to track rape.

More specifically, the researcher and journalist with the news site MuckRock has been trying to find out what happens across the country when a police department takes physical evidence from a sexual assault or rape. Does that evidence get tested? Does it contribute to prosecution? Or does it sit on a shelf?

She's sent dozens of information requests to police departments across the country in an effort to track thousands of sexual assault evidence kits, commonly known as "rape kits.'

In late October, she received a response from the Juneau Police Department.

The results were astonishing.

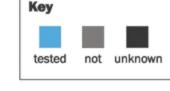
we've seen so far, Juneau is probably the worst city when it comes to testing rape kits," she said. "Nationwide, it's one of the worst we've seen."

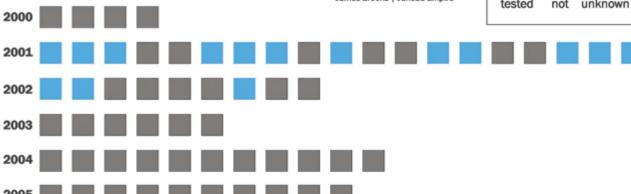
Between Jan. 1, 2000 and July 14 this year, Juneau police collected physical evidence from 283 sexual assaults. Only 77 were submitted for DNA testing. The remaining 206 — more than 70 percent — remain in storage.

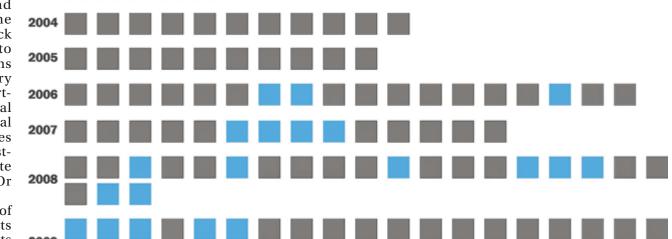
published a story about the Juneau data,



Authorities frequently (but not always) collect DNA samples from sex abuse, sex assault and rape victims and suspects. New data suggest fewer than a third of those samples are actually being tested. James Brooks | Juneau Empire











2012

2016

Soon after Nason the Alaska Department of Public Safety published a report that counted all untested rape kits in police custody within the 49th state. It found 3,484 more per capita than any other state in the

country, according to

the counting of A Joyful Heart Foundation, which tracks such fig-

ures. If Nason ranked Juneau as the worst in her memory, the state's report found still worse.

Anchorage has one untested kit for every 164 residents. In Juneau, it's one for every 160 residents. In Nome, where 83 kits have gone untested, it's one for every 46 residents.

Deputy Attorney General Rob Henderson, head of the criminal section of the Alaska Department of Law, said by phone that there are plenty

(through July 15)

SEE RAPE | Page A12

# **Global** movement coming to Juneau this week

The holiday season has begun in Juneau, with the annual shopping rush in full swing. Local organizations are joining forces with others around the world to help remind people that the season is about more than shopping.

Giving Tuesday is a follow-up to Black Friday and Cyber Monday, seeking to inspire people to collaborate in giving back in their communities. The movement aims to show the collective power of individuals and that every act of generosity counts.

REACH, Inc. and the Canvas Art Gallery are joining the movement, pledging to raise a minimum of \$3,000 for a matching grant from the Skaggs Foundation. For any donation of \$100 or more to REACH, the Skaggs Foundation will match the donation. People can go to www.reachak.org/contribute to donate.

Donations to REACH would go to various services that support those living with developmental and intellectual disabilities. REACH serves about 400 children and adults, providing youth programs, community inclusion programs, independent housing, employment opportunities and more. The Canvas Art Gallery & Studio offers exhibitions, courses and more, promoting an inclusive arts community.

Organizations in nearly 100 countries are taking part in Giving Tuesday, according to the movement's website. Other Juneau organizations listed on the Giving Tuesday site include the Healing Hand Foundation, Sealaska Heritage Institute, Southeast Alaska Conservation Council (SEACC), Southeast Alaska Independent Living, United Way of Southeast Alaska, and Young

# Shipwrecks, piracy & war fever

The strange story of mayhem on the Alaska seas 100 years ago

By ALEX MCCARTHY

The northern seas **⊥** were a dangerous place in 1917.

In the northern Atlantic, German submarines lurked beneath the waves and sunk ships into icy waters as World War I raged on.

In the waters around Alaska, all kinds of hazards awaited sailors. Blistering winds tossed boats on the waves, hidden reefs scraped against submerged hulls and blinding snowstorms led boats astray.

While the headlines atop the pages of Alaska newspapers at the time gave updates of land about 26 miles war on the other side of the world, headlines near the bottom of the page told the stories of a tumultuous month in the waters of Southeast Alaska.

November of 1917 was a month of piracy, rescue, courtroom drama and a dash of war paranoia.

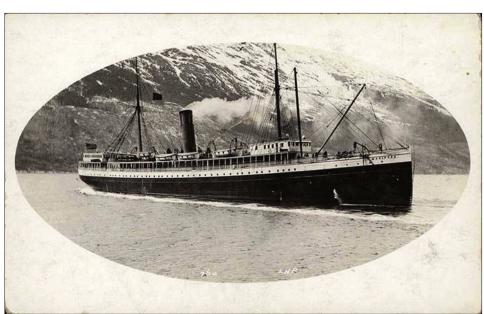
Thirty-six hours mayhem

A well known Gold Rush vessel, the wooden steamer *Al-Ki*, was sailing from Juneau to Sitka when it ran aground during a storm on Nov. 1, 1917 near Point Augusta, on Chicagof Issouthwest of Juneau.

According to a report from the Daily Alaska Dispatch, those aboard the Al-Ki quickly abandoned ship, leaving most of their baggage and valuables on board. Soon after the wreck, the sailors caught sight of an approaching vessel.

As the ship drifted closer, it came into clearer view. It was a 130foot long, steel-hulled Canadian fishing vessel called the Manhattan. The crew of about 35 was heading to the Gulf of Alaska, as fishing was a year-round venture in those days.

Any hope that the



COURTESY PHOTO | ALASKA STATE LIBRARY HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS ASL-P425-11-03 The steamship Mariposa (pictured) rescued two shipwrecked crews in November

sailors of the *Al-Ki* had of being rescued by this band of halibut fishermen quickly disappeared. As soon as they saw that the *Al-Ki* was

1917, only to wreck just days later.

abandoned, the crew of the *Manhattan* hopped aboard and began treating the boat like a rock band treats a hotel

"Trunks were hacked open with axes, valuable baggage slit with knives and the contents scat-

SEE SHIP | Page A9

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Volume 107 No. 283

youtube.com/TheJuneauEmpire

# SHIP:

Continued from Page A1

tered over the vessel," the Dispatch reported Nov. 11. "Even the Sitka and Petersburg mail was hurriedly rifled and the letters scattered to the mercy of the winds."

fishermen-These turned-pirates spent nearly 36 hours looting the *Al-Ki*. No newspaper accounts explain why the sailors from the Al-Ki didn't come to the defense of their belongings, but the crew of the Manhattan made off with blankets, coats and anything else they felt was of value on board.

The sailors from the Al-Ki watched as the *Manhattan* slipped away with their belongings, but karma was soon to catch up to the looters.

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Soon after the looting, another vessel passed by Point Augusta. This time, the stranded *Al-Ki* sailors were in luck.

The boat, a large steamer, was called the Mariposa. It picked up the stranded sailors and took them safely to nearby Hoonah. Immediately, the *Al-Ki* sailors told the story of what they had seen and a message was sent out all over Southeast Alaska: Find the *Manhattan* and the looters on board.

On Nov. 15, the job of searching for the Manhattan became much easier. During a thick snowstorm, the fishing vessel struck an uncharted rock near Lituya Bay.

The crew disembarked the sinking ship and headed toward the shore. As they quickly found out, the hazards

of the Alaska shoreline weren't limited to the icy seas.

They made it to shore, but they were incredibly unlucky with their landing spot. As the boats pulled ashore. an enraged brown bear charged out of the brush. In his book, "Land of Ocean Mists," Francis E. Caldwell tells the story.

"They were well acquainted with the perils of the sea," Caldwell wrote, "but bears were something else."

The crewmen were able to escape the clutches of the bear, even after the bear swam after them some ways after they had gone back to sea.

Coincidentally, the first vessel to find one of the Manhattan's boats was the Mariposa, the rescuer of the Al-Ki sailors not even two weeks earlier. The Manhattan sailors climbed aboard, elated to be saved, when

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they were immediately arrested for the looting of the *Al-Ki*.

#### Marine misfortune

The men were tried the following week, with a few sailors from the Al-Ki boating over to testify against the accused looters. A.H. Humfrey, an agent for the company that owned the Al-Ki, testified that he was appalled when he saw the damage to the ship.

"Not only had the vessel been looted but there was every evidence of deliberate plundering and mutilation," Humfrey testified, according to a report in the Dispatch. "Even the piano had been turned over and the keyboard kicked to pieces."

Two pieces of baggage taken from Manhattan crew members were presented to the court, appearing to contain the Al-Ki purser's coat and napkin rings that appeared to be from the *Al-Ki*.

R.A. Gunnison, assigned as the defense for the Manhattan crew members, painted a different picture. He argued, with testimony from the Manhattan crew members to back him up, that the sailors did indeed take items from the *Al-Ki*, but only to save them from falling into the sea with the doomed vessel.

As the two crews bickered in court, news came to Juneau about the ship that was responsible for rescuing both of them: the Mariposa had been lost. On Nov. 18, it crashed on a reef near Point Baker (which is now called Mariposa Reef). The string of marine misfortune had continued.

#### Lost in the waves

The trial of the Manhattan looters was put on hold shortly after the wreck of the Mariposa, and the story faded from the headlines.

All of the talk was about the Mariposa's wreck, which was a loss of an estimated \$2 million in terms of vessel and cargo, according to the Dispatch. Like the wrecks of the Al-Ki and the Manhattan, there was no loss of life. After another vessel, the Spokane, went down in what was described

as "mysterious circumstances." the murmurs turned into a frenzy.

The headlines of war stories and shipwrecks began to converge. A story from the International News Service on Nov. 27 said that survivors from the Spokane had apparently been on other ships that had gone down, and that they felt they had been

victims of acts of war. "Some of the survivors, who have been in three wrecks in as many weeks, declare openly that German agents are responsible," the report read.

A 27-year-old German named Carl Elze was arrested in Seattle soon afterward, only to be released quickly. Carl Wiltsche, a 29-year-old Austrian and Spokane crew member, was arrested not once but twice. Nothing came of the arrests, but the very fact that the arrests were made showed that despite the Pacific Northwest's isolation, war fever had certainly made its way to the Last

SEE LOST | Page A12

#### **NEIGHBORS NEWS IN BRIEF** Submitted Reports -

#### Holiday Bazaar to be held Saturday

Northern Light United Church will hold its annual Holiday Bazaar from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the church's location at 11th and B streets near the Federal Building, on Saturday, Dec. 2.

A variety of homemade soups, breads and pies will be included on the lunch menu. Lunch will be served from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The bazaar features many booths for your holiday shopping. The bakery is full of home goodies-jams and jellies, breads-both sweet and savory, cookies, candies, Christmas stolen, pies and more. The crafts booths include items made in Juneau, quilt items, table centerpieces, scarves, pot holders, gifts and Don's famous turned bowls.

Our international crafts feature items from around the world that include nativities, jewelry, baskets and numbers of other items made by SERVV employees. And our attic treasures provide affordable recycle gifts including china, glassware, costume jewelry, household and holiday décor and much more.

Frontier.

Funds from the bazaar are used for projects and programs that improve the lives of women and children. Monies are allocated locally, statewide, and internationally. Previous recipients include FAS training and camp, No More Malaria, Alaska Child & Family, AWARE and many more.

For more information, call 586-1002 or 586-9562.

**DIGITAL DOLLARS** 

# tips to stay safe while online shopping

**Marc Saltzman USA TODAY** 

Love online shopping? You're not

alone. The National Retail Federation predicts online retail will grow 8%-12% in 2017, up to three times higher than the growth rate of total retail sales.

#### **Look for** the padlock

Always use a secure Internet connection when making a purchase. Reputable websites use technologies such as SSL (Secure Socket Layer) that encrypt data during transmission.

What does that mean to you?

Look for the little padlock in the address bar or a URL that starts with "https" instead of "http," as the "s" stands for "secure."

#### Use a secure payment method

Only shop on sites that take secure payment methods, such as credit cards and PayPal, as they likely give you buyer protection just in case there's a dispute.

In other words, you won't be held liable for fraudulent charges. Even before it gets to that, you might be notified by your credit card company or bank if suspicious activity is detected.

Look for well-known security labels such as DigiCert, VeriSign, and other seals.

#### Password pointers

A strong password is at least seven characters long, has a combination of letters, numbers and symbols, and with some uppercase characters, too. Change passwords routinely. Or use password management apps if you're worried you

won't remember the password. Many opt for a passphrase instead of a password, which is typically a long sequence of strung-together words, but perhaps with a number and symbol in

there, too. For example, the sentence "My dog Eddie has a birthday May 15!" could be used to create a passphrase like "Md3habM15!"

It's good to reset your shopping passwords every so often, just in case someone guesses them, or if there's a data breach at an online retailer.

#### Do your homework

When on marketplaces like eBay, check the seller's reputation and read comments before buying a product to see what the experience was like for past customers.

Also, don't forget about the No. 1 tip about shopping: If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

Ignore emails or texts that claim to be from a retailer (or your bank or Internet Service Provider). These "phishing" attempts look legit, but it they ask you to confirm your financial or personal details on a website, they're fake.

## **5** Watch out for fake shopping apps

As we saw last year, hundreds of phony retail apps popped up in Apple's App Store and Google Play, in the hopes of tricking shoppers into downloading and using them.

Similar to "phishing" emails that look like they're from legitimate stores, these counterfeit apps want your credit card information to steal your identity. Some have been found to contain malwarethat can also infect a mobile device, while others ask you to log in with Facebook credentials to lift personal data.

Be sure you're downloading the legitimate app. If you're interacting with brands on social media, make sure they're "verified," with the little blue checkmark by their profile, which means the company is legit.

Follow Marcon*Twitter:* @marc\_saltzman. E-mail him at askmarcsaltzman@gmail.com.

#### THE WEEK AHEAD



spendina was up 1% ın Sep tember, the most in eight years, largely as a result of the healthy labor market. **GETTY** IMAGES

Consumer

# It's not just Black Friday: **Consumers driving economy**

**Paul Davidson** 

USA TODAY

After hitting the malls over the weekend, the resurgent American shopper takes the spotlight again in this week's economic news, with reports on consumer confidence and spending due out. Data on new-home sales and manufacturing are also expected to reflect continued gains.

New-home sales soared 18.9% in September to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 667,000, the most in a decade. Rebuilding from hurricanes in Texas and Florida may be part of the story. But many Americans also may be buying newly-constructed homes because of a shortage of existing units. For October, economists surveyed by Action Economics expect the Commerce Department on Monday to report a drop of 8% from that lofty level to a still robust annual rate of 615,000.

Consumer confidence jumped to the highest level in 17 years in October on steady job and income growth and a stock market that keeps setting new records. Modestly higher gasoline prices may have damped Americans' outlook marginally this month, says Gus Faucher, chief economist of PNC Financial Services Group. But the economists surveyed still expect the Conference Board on Tuesday to announce that its confidence index in November remained very close to its

recent high. That would be "a good

sign for a strong holiday sales season,"

PNC wrote to clients. On Wednesday, Commerce provides its second estimate of economic growth in the third quarter. Its first reading showed the nation's gross domestic product expanding at a brisk 3% annual rate despite some negative effects from the hurricanes, as consumer and business spending more than offset weak housing construction. Consumption in the July-September period will likely be revised up on Wednesday, Faucher says, a bump that economists say should push third-quarter growth to an even stronger 3.2%.

Consumer spending leaped 1% in September, the most in eight years, largely as a result of the healthy labor market. Strong auto sales also helped underpin the surge as many people replaced vehicles damaged by the storms. Faucher says car sales declined in October, partly offsetting sturdy spending on services. Economists expect Commerce on Thursday to report a more modest 0.2% gain last month in consumer spending, which makes up about 70% of economic activity.

The nation's manufacturers have been buoyed by an improving global economy and a revived oil sector. Slower car sales likely crimped activity a bit in October, Faucher says. But economists still expect the Institute for Supply Management on Friday to announce that its index of manufacturing activity continued to reveal strong growth.

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# LOST:

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For those in Juneau, that seemed fever have abated their anger at the 35 Canadian fishermen who remained in jail. The Manhattan crew members had been remarkably unlucky during their trip through Alaska's seas from uncharted rocks to enraged brown bears to being stuck in jail — but they did get very fortunate in one important sense.

The evidence that was presented at trial, according to Juneau District Attorney Smiser, wasn't enough to convict the crew members. News of Smiser dismissing the trial only took up one paragraph in the Jan. 13, 1918 edition of the *Dispatch*.

The crew members of the *Manhattan*, who were at the mercy of the Alaska weather and wildlife for their whole bizarre journey, were bailed out in the end, as the evidence of their crime was erased by the ever-treacherous waters and shore of the Alaska coast.

 Contact reporter Alex McCarthy at 523-2271 or alex.mccarthy@ juneauempire.com. Michael Burwell, co-author of "Shipwrecks of the Alaskan Shelf and Shore." contributed research to this article.

#### References

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Alaska State Library - Historical Collections

COURTESY PHOTO | ALASKA STATE LIBRARY HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS ASL-P87-1584 The Al-Ki sits immobile on Nov. 1, 1917. The boat was ransacked soon afterward by fishermen-turned-pirates aboard the fishing vessel Manhattan.

## RAPE:

Continued from Page A1

of reasons why a kit might not be tested.

"A (rape kit) is helpful, but depending upon the actual issue, it may not be determinative," he said.

If both victim and alleged attacker agree they had sex but disagree whether that sex was consentual, physical evidence can't help. If the prosecutor declines to take the case, or the victim decides to not press charges, the kit probably won't be tested.

Victim advocates say that's a bad strategy. They argue that if all kits are tested, police have a better chance to identify serial rapists.

In 2011, Ohio's attorney general started an effort to test that state's 14,000 untested rape kits. In the six years since that effort started, Ohio tested more than 6,800 kits and identified 436 serial rapists in Cleveland's Cuyahoga County alone. One serial rapist was linked to 17 assaults.

'Someone who commits this crime in Juneau can commit this crime in Massachusetts or Texas," Nason explained. "It very often connects people to multiple crimes and can connect people to future crimes, too.'

Rep. Geran Tarr, D-Anchorage, was the author of a legislative amendment that resulted in the statewide report earlier this month. She said now that the state knows how big its problem is, it can figure out how to fix it.

"You need a starting place to understand the extent of that problem," she said. "Now that we have that number ... we know what the remaining amount will be and figure out how to test those using state dollars."

It's not likely to be cheap. The state report estimates that if all new sexual assault kits were tested, it would cost \$454,000 per year. Those are just new kits, however. Clearing the backlog would require \$2.2 million to \$3 million and several years. The state

would have to hire several new workers at the state crime lab or contract the testing out to private labs.

The state has already been awarded federal grants to test kits possessed by the Alaska State Troopers, and money to study why some kits are tested while others are not.

Only 375 of the 764 trooper-held kits will be tested under that grant, however, and competition for federal grant money has become intense as other states ramp up their own testing programs and a costcutting Congress prepares to reduce funding.

Deputy Chief David Campbell of the Juneau Police Department said JPD has not yet attempted to pursue grants for its backlog. Using state estimates, Juneau's backlog would cost as much as \$309,000 to erase, and help doesn't seem likely from the

Alaska is facing a \$2.7 billion annual budget shortfall, and it has already cut funding for public safety programs as part of an effort to

[A rape kit] very often connects people to multiple crimes and can connect people to future crimes, too

VANESSA NASON Researcher and Journalist

reduce that deficit.

In the meantime, the state is changing some procedures: Police departments are now required to send all rape kits to the state crime lab in Anchorage for collective storage and tracking. Campbell said Juneau started that practice Nov. 1.

Despite the fiscal obstacles facing any effort to reduce the backlog, Tarr said she intends to push the Legislature to reduce or eliminate the backlog.

"I think it should be a near-term priority for sure," she said. • Contact reporter James

Brooks at james.k.brooks@ juneauempire.com or call 523-

# **Police** seeking culprit of waste facility break-in

An unsolved break-in at a local wastewater treatment building is still causing a stink with the Juneau Police Department.

At 9:40 a.m. Oct. 24, an unknown burglar (or burglars) broke into a wastewater treatment building on Egan Drive. The suspect or suspects used a tool to break the door, according to the police report. Nothing else about the suspect or suspects is known, except that various testing items worth an estimated \$602 were stolen from inside.

Anybody with information is encouraged to call Juneau Crime Line at 523-7700 or JPD at 500-0600, or go to www.juneaucrimeline.com. Crime Line is a nonprofit organization that aids police agencies in investigations. Tipsters are guaranteed anonymity and could be eligible for a reward.

